

### 2022: A rapidly shifting frontline and widespread disruption

Ukraine had been in protracted crisis since the annexation of Crimea and the loss of control of parts of Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts from 2014. In February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion. The Russian army quickly moved across much of eastern and southern Ukraine, advancing along main roads in northern oblasts towards Kyiv. By the end of the year, the Ukrainian army staged a counteroffensive, restoring control over substantial parts of the contested territory. These abrupt territorial shifts were accompanied by mass displacement, widespread damage to settlements, and severe pressure on civilian infrastructure.

### 2023: The frontline stabilizes, with small advances made by both armies

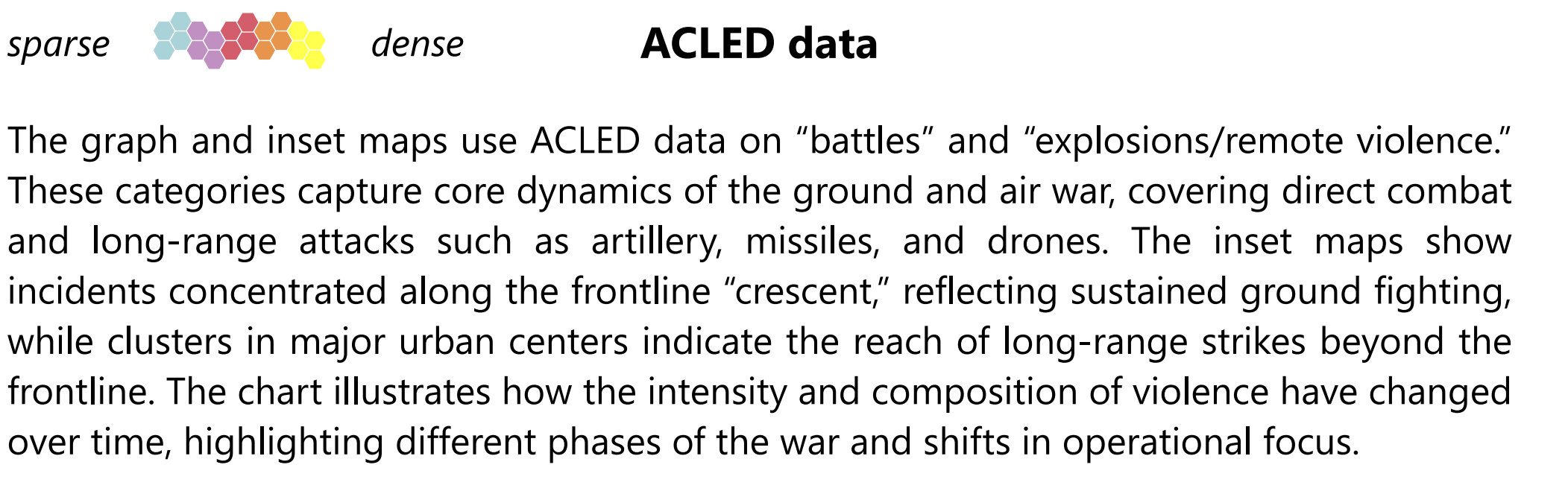
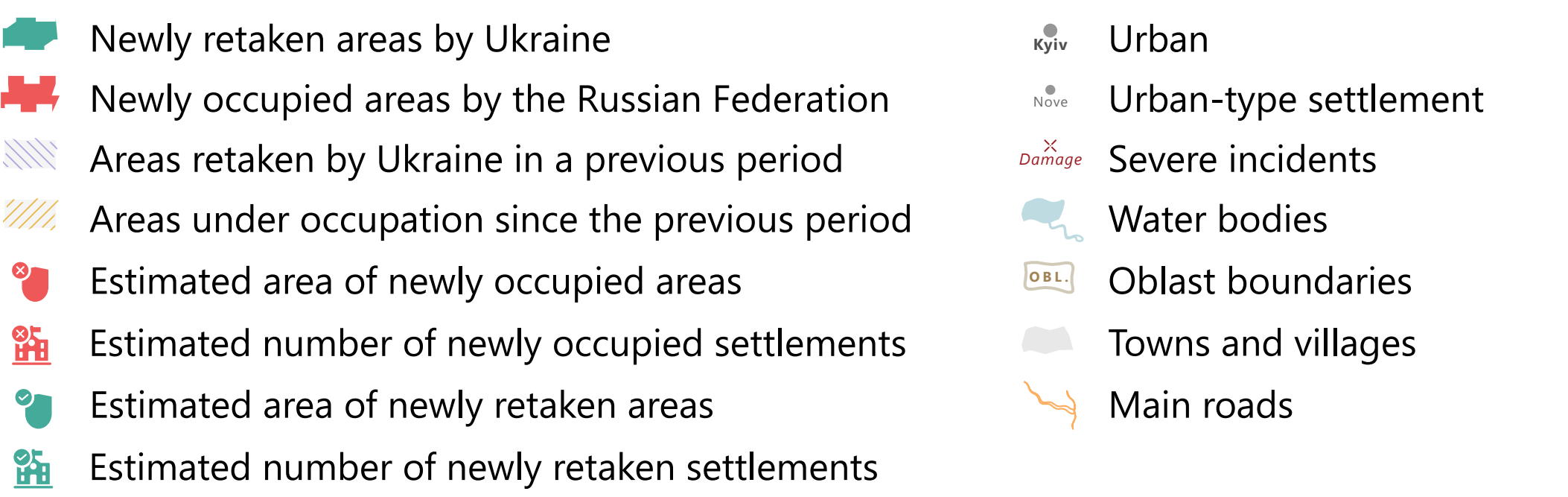
During 2023, the frontlines became relatively stable. Military operations resulted in limited territorial changes. The operational emphasis was placed on Donetsk, Zaporizka, and Luhanska oblasts. Whilst the rate of battles was relatively low, the use of long-range artillery was widespread, affecting cities along the frontline like Kherson and Nikopol. The summer saw the destruction of the Kakhovka dam, which caused downstream destruction along the length of the Dnipro river. Civilian infrastructure and essential services were heavily impacted, leading to significant humanitarian challenges. Both sides increasingly relied on aerial and drone strikes to target strategic positions beyond the frontline.

### 2024: Attritional warfare and incremental territorial change

In 2024, the conflict was marked by attritional fighting and gradual Russian advances. Two new fronts opened: Russian troops in northern Kharkivska oblast faced heavy bombardment, while Ukrainian forces moved into Kursk, Russia. Small drones became increasingly common along the frontline, hindering humanitarian aid and endangering civilians. Long-range strikes hit cities nationwide, damaging critical infrastructure including power stations. By summer, Ukraine implemented nationwide power outages. Displacement and civilian casualties rose, worsening the humanitarian crisis, as both sides fortified positions for further escalation.

### 2025: Prolonged contest and entrenched frontlines

By 2025, frontlines remained largely entrenched, with Russian forces consolidating gains in Donetsk, Zaporizka and Luhanska oblasts. Dnipropetrovska oblast saw direct conflict for the first time, while Kharkiv and Sumy remained active but with limited movement. High-tempo battles gradually shifted territory, continuing the accelerating trend from 2024. Long-range loitering munitions, including hundreds of Shahed drones weekly, increasingly targeted civilian areas. By winter, energy infrastructure damage forced nationwide power outages, and civilian life remained heavily disrupted. Humanitarian access was severely limited, compounding the challenges for affected populations.



**Disclaimer**  
The data on this map regarding the number of settlements and territorial areas (in km<sup>2</sup>) are approximate and based on open-source DeepState data at the end of each year, reflecting an analytical assessment rather than precise measurement. They aim to illustrate territorial changes over the year. Given the fluid and often fragmented situation on the ground, the data may include generalizations, overlaps, or repeated references to the same locations. They do not capture short-term fluctuations and are not official statistics, but provide humanitarian and contextual insight into spatial changes and their broader implications.

